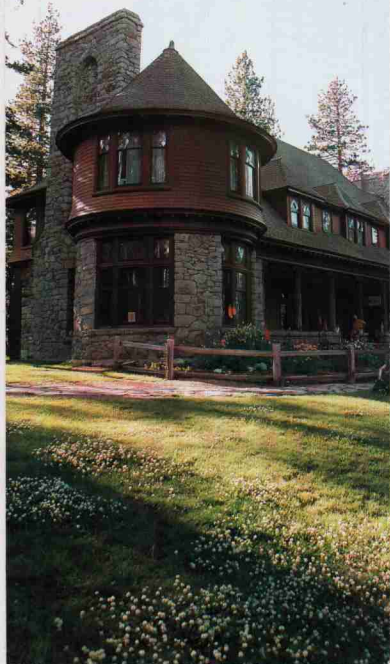


SUGAR PINE POINT

State Park



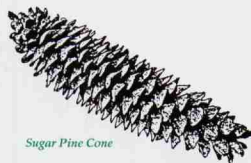
Sugar Pine Point is a forested promontory on the western side of Lake Tahoe. The park includes a mile and three quarters of lake frontage with a number of sandy beaches and a unique natural area where the untouched, primal forest of the Tahoe Basin marches right down to the water's edge. The developed area south of General Creek features a number of historic buildings including a hand-hewn, 19th century log cabin and an elegant turn-of-the-century summer home known as the Ehrman Mansion.

The park extends some three-and-one-half miles west into the General Creek watershed, a natural entryway into the 62,469-acre Desolation Wilderness Area. Clearly marked trails (suitable for summer use) wind up the gentle, forest-filled valley formed by General Creek and provide easy access to the wilderness beyond.

Natural History

The floor of the canyon is made up of glacial debris (mostly decomposed granite) that was deposited approximately 10,000 years ago as the glacier melted.

The forest at Sugar Pine Point includes sugar and Jeffrey pines, white and red firs, and incense cedars. Lodgepole pine, quaking aspen, black cottonwood and mountain alder are found in the stream zone along General Creek. Shrubs include green-leaf manzanita, pinemat manzanita, squaw carpet, mountain whitethorn, some chinquapin and huckleberry oak. Spring and summer wildflower displays include Indian paintbrush, lupine, columbine, penstemon, and several types of buckwheat. The showy, red, saprophytic snowplant can be seen during the spring.



Sugar Pine Cone

Wildlife is most plentiful in the more remote parts of the park, but chickadees, chipmunks, and both Beechey and golden-mantled ground squirrels are often seen even in the developed areas. Other less often seen animals include black bear, coyote, raccoon, porcupine, pine marten, beaver, bobcat and deer. Steller's jays, juncos, mountain chickadees, flycatchers, woodpeckers, and the brilliantly-colored western tanager are among the many kinds of birds that live in this forest. Mergansers, Canada geese, mallard ducks, and kingfishers can often be seen on or near lakes and streams.

Although many of these animals and birds winter elsewhere, some of them are year-round residents. Their lively presence adds a fascinating dimension to the otherwise profoundly quiet, snow covered world of this park in mid-winter. Bald eagles, for example, can sometimes be seen perched in trees overlooking the lake.

As wild animals are inclined to steal food and we ask you not to feed them please secure food in your vehicle at night or when you are not present.



Black Bear

Exhibits and publications about the natural history of the Tahoe Basin are available in the Nature Center situated in the Ehrman Mansion's old power-generating plant.

During your visit, you may see evidence of various ongoing natural resource management programs. Erosion control, thinning of overcrowded forests, removal of dead trees in high-use areas, prescribed burning and habitat improvement are a few of the many projects that are being undertaken in order to maintain or restore natural conditions within the park.

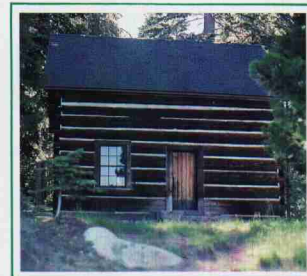
Interpretive programs offered during the summer include nature walks, campfire programs, and junior ranger programs for children ages 7 through 12. Check the posted schedule for details.

Human History

Human beings have lived in this scenic region for thousands of years. The Washoe Indians, who lived in the Carson Valley east of Lake Tahoe, spent their summers hunting and fishing here. It was a time of feasting, preparing food for the coming winter, and socializing with friends and relatives they hadn't seen since the previous year. Bedrock mortars and other evidence of long-term seasonal residence can be seen in various

places near the lake, including several sites within Sugar Pine Point State Park.

Lake Tahoe first came to the attention of the western world through the journals of John C. Fremont, who sighted Lake Tahoe in February 1844 while leading the U.S. Army's first official exploratory expedition across the Sierra Nevada and into California. One of the first permanent residents of this area was an old-time frontiersman from Kentucky by the name of "General" William Phipps (1813-1891). He staked out a 160-acre homestead claim on Sugar Pine Point in the spring of 1860, and soon afterwards built himself a rough-hewn log cabin. In 1872, he built a second cabin, which can be seen today near the shore just south of General Creek.



Phipps Cabin

The discovery of silver at Virginia City, and the resulting rush of people to the Comstock Lode during the 1860s and 1870s, brought development to the south shore of the lake. At the same time, in order to supply lumber and firewood for the mines and rapidly growing towns, logging activity increased throughout the lake basin. A sawmill was built at Glenbrook in 1873 and saw logs were brought there by railroad and by steamers that towed great log booms from various points around the lake. The lake basin's most easily reached sugar and Jeffrey pines were cut and hauled out of the forest and down to the lake by teams of oxen and steam donkeys. There was even a logging camp at Sugar Pine Point for a while, which explains why there aren't more sugar pines in the vicinity of General Creek. We can thank General Phipps for protecting his 160 acres from the saw.

Many people discovered Tahoe's beauty during the Comstock mining boom and soon a number of large, elegant hotels were under construction to serve well-to-do travelers from Nevada and California. Tahoe Tavern at Tahoe City and the opulent Tallac House near the present Forest Service Visitor Center were two of the most famous.

In 1888, Phipps sold his property to W. W. "Billy" Lapham, who proceeded to establish a summer resort, the Bellevue. Taken over by the bank in 1889, and by new owners and managers in 1890, Bellevue was rapidly coming to be known as an elegant family resort when fire destroyed the main hotel building and nearby cottages in 1893.

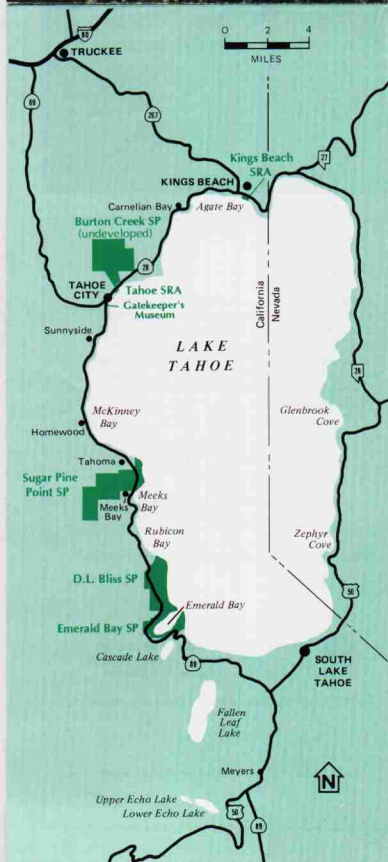
One of the first to begin buying property for their own private use was Isaac W. Hellman, an internationally known pioneer west-coast banker. He bought up about 1,000 acres in the Sugar Pine Point area in 1897-1898, and in 1901-1903 built a sumptuous new summer home - "the finest High Sierra summer home in California," - using locally quarried granite and other native materials.

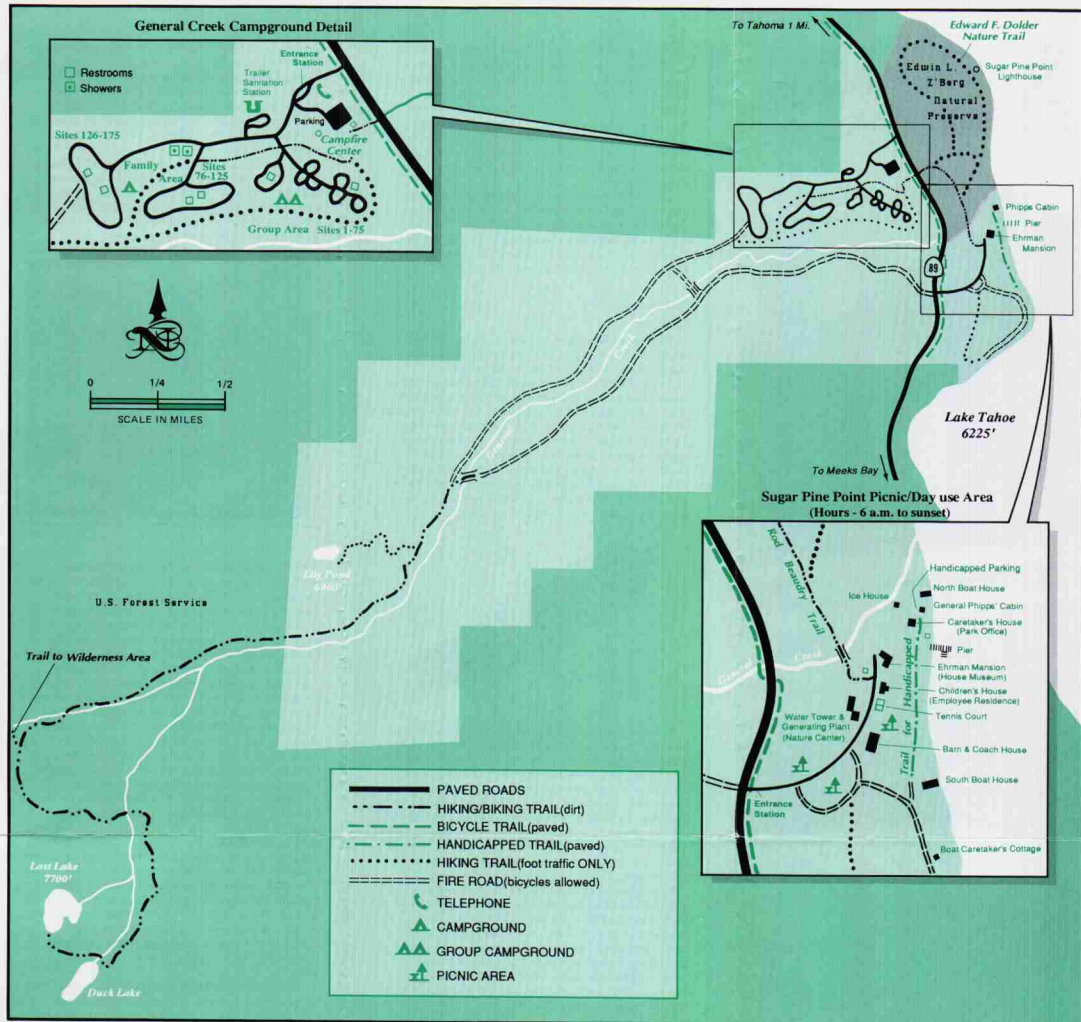
Designed by Walter Dantforth Bliss, a well known architect of the time, the rustic but grand, wood-paneled, three-story house was equipped with the very best utility systems (including electric lights), and was surrounded by carefully planted and tended trees, lawns, and flowerbeds. Successive generations of the same family continued to use the house, which came to be widely known as the Ehrman Mansion, though the family's name for it was Pine Lodge. In 1965, the house and nearly 2,000 acres of land in the General Creek Watershed were acquired by the people of California for park purposes. Today, the house, a fascinating example of the "opulent" tradition in Tahoe summer homes, serves as a photo museum, complete with furnishings. Guided tours are scheduled from July 1 through Labor Day.



Circular Bedroom

Cover Photo by David Weintraub
All others by Ken McKouven





Camping

There are 175 campsites in the campground. Each site has a table and stove. Restrooms with sinks and flush toilets are located nearby. Shower facilities and a sanitary dump station are also available during the summer. Family campsites can accommodate a maximum of eight people and three vehicles. Ten group campsites can each accommodate up to 40 people and 10 vehicles. The campsites are suitable for tents, trailers up to 24 feet, and motorhomes up to 30 feet. Reservations for family campsites can be made up to eight weeks in advance by calling MISTIX at 1-800/444-7275. Group campsite reservations can be made up to 12 weeks in advance. Reservations are strongly advised during the summer (mid June through Labor Day).

The park remains open throughout the winter months. One restroom is heated, and the road and parking spaces are kept clear of snow, though considerable forethought and good camping equipment are important. Winter conditions at this elevation (6,200) include frequent snow storms and deep snow packs. Temperatures go down to near zero.

Swimming and Boating

The park's beach and central pier are popular places for swimming, sunbathing, picnicking, and fishing. Please swim with appropriate caution; Tahoe's waters are quite cold. Nearby marinas provide boat launching, mooring, and rentals for fishing, water skiing or just exploring. Due to space limitations, boats may not be beached or moored overnight at Sugar Pine Point. There is a special boat camp at Emerald Bay State Park.

Hiking, Biking, and Cross Country Skiing

Trails serve almost every part of the park. A short loop trail through the Z'berg Natural Preserve, the Dolder Trail follows the lakeshore and passes the world's highest working lighthouse. For those with more time, the General Creek Trail is a 6 1/2-mile loop, offering an optional side trip to Lilly Pond. Lost Lake, a beautiful alpine lake, is a full 15-mile round trip, and should only be tackled by seasoned hikers with ample time (6 to 7 hours).

Mountain bike use has increased significantly over the last few years. Mountain bikers are asked to be responsible riders, trading lightly, staying on designated riding trails only, and announcing their presence when coming up on hikers. Trails not shown as hike/bike trails are off limits to bikes. Please help us protect the park by not creating new trails. The paved West Shore Bike Trail parallels the highway through the park as far as the south boundary where it officially ends.

Dogs must be kept on leash (six-foot maximum length) and are allowed only in the developed areas of the park. Dogs are not permitted on park trails.

Those wishing to enter Desolation Wilderness through the park will need to obtain a wilderness permit from the U.S. Forest Service for both day-use and overnight trips. Permits are available at the South Lake Tahoe Forest Service Headquarters, the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, or (when staffed) the William Kent Campground. Day-use permits are available at most Forest Service trailheads.

During the winter, rangers groom two of the four cross-country ski trails and offer ski lessons or tours practically each weekend during January, February and March. You can obtain the Sierra District's Fall and Winter Hike Schedule by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Sierra District State Parks, P.O. Drawer D, Tahoe, CA 96142.

Fishing

Deep-line fishermen can try their luck along Lake Tahoe's 300-foot-deep underwater ledges by trolling for lake trout (Mackinaw) and kokanee Salmon. Top-lining (trolling near the surface) for rainbows is also popular. Shore fishing does not tend to be productive, though the lake's tributaries can be. Be aware that these streams have a very short open season, usually from July 1 through September 30.

Sugar Pine Point State Park
P. O. Box 266
Tahoma, California 96142
916/525-7982

You are responsible to know park rules and regulations.



State of California • The Resources Agency
Department of Parks & Recreation
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